

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL FUKUOKA JA

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO JA

INFO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 439

COMUSNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA

COMFLEACT SASEBO JA

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E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: MARR, PINT, JA

SUBJ: LOCAL REACTION TO STORY OF REVERSIONAL VARIOUS FACILITIES

AT SASEBO

SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT THE REVERSION OF SEVERAL AREAS AT FLEET ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS EXPECTED FOR SOME TIME BY RESIDENTS OF THE CITY AND NAGASAKI PREFECTURE. APPARENTLY SASEBO MAYOR TSUJI HAD BEEN BASIS FOR STORY IN MARCH TWENTY EDITION OF NAGASAKI SHIMBUN PREDICTING REVERSION OF PARTS OF BASE. MAYOR AND JSDF ARE BOTH GIRDING FOR COMPETITION OVER WHO

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WILL GET WHAT OF REVERTED AREAS, ALTHOUGH BOTH ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT SAYING ANYTHING PUBLICLY. END SUMMARY.

MARCH TWENTY-THIRD EDITION OF NISHI NIHON SHIMBUN HAD MAJOR STORY ANNOUNCING REVERSION BY JUNE THIRTY OF TATEGAMI PIER, NUMBER ONE AND TWO DRYDOCKS, NIMITZ PARK, AND CP BUILDING. STORY ALSO STATED TWO HOMEPORTED SUPPLY SHIPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN. ALTHOUGH DETAILS HAD NOT BEEN KNOWN, OUR PRELIMINARY CONTACTS SAY REVERSION NOT UNEXPECTED. SASEBO CITY OFFICIAL IN LIAISON SECTION TOLD US PROPOSED RIFS, REDUCTION OF PEAK OF 340 WORKERS AT SHIP REPAIR

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FACILITY TO 20 AT PRESENT, AND VARIOUS IDLE FACILITIES HAD CAUSED

LOCAL RESIDENTS TO ANTICIPATE REVERSION. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, LEAD ARTICLE IN NAGASAKI SHIMBUN OF MARCH 20 HAD GIVEN MOST RESIDENTS FEEL OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. SOURCE OF ARTICLE, WHO ALMOST CERTAINLY SASEBO MAYOR ICHIZO TSUJI, HAD SAID MAYOR HAD ADMONISHED ADMIRAL SPEER AT PARTY ON MARCH 12 TO MAKE CLEAR NAVY'S INTENTIONS. MAYOR, WHO IS VERY SKILLED AT HANDLING PRESS AND OTHER PUBLIC RELATIONS, WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT, WHILE HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OFFICIAL, HE FELT THERE WAS SOME CHANCE THAT REVERSION MIGHT TAKE PLACE, AND THAT HE INTENDED TO PUSH FOR ITS REALIZATION. EVERYONE SEEMS TO ASSUME JMSDF WILL GET AT LEAST PART OF REVERTED

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AREA, BUT CIVILIANS OFFICIALS HOPE TO KEEP IT TO MINIMUM. KIYOTAKA SHIKATA, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SASEBO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TOLD US "THIS IS GOOD NEWS PROVIDED SDF DOESN'T GET ALL THE AREAS. THE FACILITIES SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO CIVILIAN ENTERPRISES." THE MAYOR WAS QUOTED IN THE NISHI NIHON SHIMBUN AS SAYING THAT HE WILL NEGOTIATE WITH SDF WITH AN EYE TO BOTH THE CITY'S PROSPERITY AND SDF'S FUNCTION.

DFAA IS KEEPING VERY LOW POSTURE. HEAD OF PLANNING SECTION OF FUKUOKA DFAA SAID THAT HIS OFFICE HAD ASKED FLEACTS ABOUT STORY. IT HAD BEEN DENIED, AND THEREFORE, THEY COULD SAY NOTHING ABOUT IT OFFICIALLY, HE ADDED. SASEBO OFFICIAL OF DFAA, WHO HAS BEEN QUITE FORTHCOMING IN PAST, SAID THEY HAD HEARD NOTHING ABOUT IT. IF TRUE, HE SAID, THERE WOULD BE FRICTION BETWEEN CITY AND JMSDF IF LATTER TOOK OVER ENTIRE AREAS. HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE NO FURTHER COMMENT.

SASEBO CHAPTER OF ZEN CHU RO HAS, ACCORDING TO NISHI NIHON SHIMBUN, DECIDED THERE IS VERY LITTLE THEY CAN DO ABOUT IT AND UNION IS GOING TO ACCEPT REDUCTION WITH MINIMUM STRUGGLE. PAPER REPORTS ZEN CHU RO HAD EXPECTED REDUCTION SINCE JANUARY, WHEN BASE HAD PROPOSED, ACCORDING TO PAPER, DISMISSAL OF ALL EMPLOYEES WITH

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RE-EMPLOYMENT AT LOWER WAGE RATE.

RICHARDSON

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